On the Buddha’s Authority
A Translation of the Pramāṇasiddhi Chapter of Dharmakīrti’s *Pramāṇavārttika*

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Contents

Chapter 1

What is a Source of Knowledge?

1.1 Verse of Dedication (v. 1)

1. vidhūtakalpanājālagambhīrodāramūrtaye
namaḥ samantabhadrāya samantaspharaṇatviṣe

rtog pa'i dra ba rnam bsal zhing
zab cing rgya che'i sku mnga' ba
kun tu bzang po'i 'od zer dag
kun nas 'phro la phyag 'tshal lo

Homage to him who is universally good, whose manifestations are divested of the snares of conceptualizing and are profound and lofty, and whose light spreads in all directions.

Manorathanandin interprets this verse of dedication to the Buddha in a characteristically Mahāyāna, and especially Yogācāra, manner. The manifestations (*mūrti*), he says, refer to the three bodies of the Buddha. The phrase "divested of the snares of conceptualizing" refers to freedom from the habit of making a distinction between oneself as the subject of knowledge and the rest of the world as the object of knowledge (*grāhya-grāhaka-adhyāropa*). What characterizes a Buddha is this freedom from a dualism that results from falsely distinguishing between a knowing self and knowable others. In particular, says Manorathanandin, this freedom is what characterizes the Buddha's Dharma-body (*dharma-kāya*).

The modifier "profound" is said to be applied to emphasize the fact that the Buddha described in this way is not known to the "rhinoceroses" (*khaḍga*) and the disciples (*śrāvaka*); the term "rhinoceros" is probably a metaphor for the solitary buddhas (*pratyeka-buddha*), that is, those who become awakened without teachers and who also choose not to teach. The modifier "lofty" is said to suggest that the Buddha has comprehended all that can be known that is of value to living beings (*sakala-jñeya-sattva-artha*). The two modifiers in the phrase "profound and lofty" intimate the Buddha's

other two manifestations, that is, the body of intense enjoyment (*sāṃbhogika-kāya*) and the transformational body (*nairmāṇika-kāya*).

The Buddha's awakening is said to have been of benefit both to the Buddha himself and to others. The above discussions of the three manifestations of the Buddha, says Manorathanandin, refer to his virtues that are of benefit to himself. The remainder of this opening verse suggests those virtues that are principally of benefit to others. The phrase "who is universally good" means the Buddha who is entirely wholesome (*kalyāṇa*), while the phrase "whose light spreads in all directions" emphasizes that his teachings have travelled to all regions of the world.

Notwithstanding the attempt by Manorathanandin to find Mahāyāna sentiments in this opening verse and in some subsequent parts of the text, there is little in what Dharmakīrti himself writes that would require reading him as a Mahāyānin. On the contrary, since one of his principal concerns seems to be to provide a rational defense of Buddhism in general against the criticisms of non-Buddhists, Dharmakīrti appears to have taken care to avoid showing any bias towards any particular school or sect within Buddhism.

1.2 Statement of Purpose (v. 2)

2. prāyaḥ prākṛtasaktir apratibalaprajño janaḥ kevalam
nānarthy eva subhāṣitaiḥ parigato vidveṣṭy apīrṣyāmalaiḥ
tenāyaṃ na paropakāra iti naś cintāpi cetaś ciraṃ
sūktābhyāsavivarddhitavyasanam ity atrānubaddhaspṛham

skye bo phal cher phal la chags shing
shes rab rtsal med pas na legs bshad rnams
don du mi gnyer kho nar ma zad
phrag dog dri ma dag gis sdang bar yang
yongs gyur des na bdag la 'di ni gzhan la
phan pa yin zhes bsam pa'ang med
sems ni yun ring legs bshad goms pa lhur
len bskyed phyir 'di la dga' ba skyes

Usually people are addicted to vulgarity and lack enabling wisdom. They are not only disinterested in what is said well, but, being afflicted with the filth of envy, are even hostile towards it. Therefore, although I believe this work to be of no use to others, my heart, its determination increased through repeated study of eloquent works for a long time, has become eager for it.

It is customary at the beginning of a scholarly work for the author to state the subject matter of the composition and to indicate for what kind of audience the treatise was composed. In this verse Dharmakīrti follows the unusual tack of pointing out that the subject matter of his work is so refined, and the majority of people so small-minded,

that he may have no audience at all. But a small audience cannot detract from an author's delight in saying what is truly worth hearing.

Manorathanandin suggests that the people who are "addicted to vulgarity" are those who have a love for the scholarly writings of outsiders (*bahis*), by which he probably means non-Buddhists. As will become evident as this text progresses, one of Dharmakīrti's chief aims in this work is to defend the principles of Buddhism against the anti-religious views of unnamed materialists who were presumably enjoying some popularity in his time. Indeed, given the amount of attention that he gives to materialist views in this text, it seems likely that the materialists, rather than Brāhmaṇas and other religious figures, were the target of the comment in this verse about those who are "addicted to vulgarity".

1.3 Definition of knowledge

In the next verse, Dharmakīrti defines knowledge (*pramāṇa*), which is the principal subject matter of his whole treatise. The ultimate purpose of this discussion of what exactly knowledge is—which runs, incidentally, for a total of 287 verses—is to show that the Buddha is an authority, that is, source of knowledge. According to Manorathanandin, Dharmakīrti's interest in this issue was inspired by the opening verse of Dignāga's *Pramāṇa-samuccaya.* That text, as is known from quotations in other sources, begins with this verse:

> pramāṇabhūtāya jagaddhitaiṣiṇe
> praṇamya śāstre sugatāya tāyinoḥ
> pramāṇasiddhyai svamatāt samuccayaḥ
> kariṣyate viprasṛtād ihaikataḥ
>
> (Hattori 1968, p. 73, n. 1.1).

> After bowing to him who has become a source of knowledge, who yearns for the well-being of the world, who is a teacher, who has attained goodness, and who is a guide, I will, in order to establish knowledge, make a miscellany here in one place out of my widely disseminated thoughts.

The second line of Dignāga's opening verse, incidentally, is cited differently by Pāṇḍeya (1989 ed, p. 2, n. 1):

> kutarkasambhrāntajanānukampayā
> pramāṇasiddhir vidhivad vidhīyate

> ...out of compassion for people who have been bewildered by faulty reasoning, I shall methodically establish the source of knowledge.

Given, however, that both Tibetan translations of Dignāga's work corroborate the version of the verse cited by Hattori, it is more likely to be authentic than the version cited by Pāṇḍeya.

In his own prose commentary to his opening verse, Dignāga explains that the Buddha's authority consists in the excellence of his motivations and the excellence of the

natural results of those motivations. The excellence of the Buddha's motivations can in turn be understood as the excellence of his intentions, and the excellence of his implementation of those motivations. The excellence of his intentions is expressed by the phrase "who yearns for the well-being of the world," while the excellence of his implementation is expressed by the phrase "who is a teacher." The excellence of the natural consequences of the Buddha's motivations, on the other hand, can be understood as the excellent attainments that are of benefit to the Buddha himself, and the excellent attainment that is of benefit to others. The attainments that benefit the Buddha himself are suggested by the phrase "who has attained goodness (*sugata*)," an epithet that is traditionally explained with reference to the fact that the Buddha a) is admired, b) will never again be reborn, and c) has achieved all his goals. The attainment that is of benefit to others is indicated by the phrase "who is a guide," since his teachings guide people across the turbulent waters of life to the yonder shore of nirvana.

A summary of the outline of Dignāga's commentary to his own verse is shown in the following outline, along with an indication of the numbers of the verses in Dharmakīrti's treatise that expand upon these themes.

1. excellence of motivation (*hetu-sampatti*)
   (a) excellence of intentions (*āśaya-sampad*): "who yearns for the well-being of the world" (*jagad-dhitaiṣitā*) (36–133)
   (b) excellence of implementation (*prayoga-sampad*): "who is a teacher" (*śāstṛ*) (134–141ab)
2. excellence of consequences (*phala-sampatti*)
   (a) of benefit to himself (*svārtha-sampad*): "who has attained goodness" (*sugata*) (141cd–147ab)
   (b) of benefit to others (*parārtha-sampad*): "who is a guide" (*tāyin*) (147cd–285ab)

Dignāga's explanation of his opening verse harks back to traditional views of the Buddha as expressed in such abhidharma literature as Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* under 7.34, where one finds a similar itemization of the Buddhas' greatness (*buddhānāṃ māhātmyam*). Note that Vasubandhu offers more and different details than those specified by Dignāga.

1. excellence of motivation (*hetu-sampad*)
   (a) practice in accumulating all virtues and knowledge (*sarva-puṇya-jñāna-sambhārābhyāsa*)
   (b) practice for a long time (*dīrgha-kālābhyāsa*)
   (c) uninterrupted practice (*nirantarābhyāsa*)
   (d) reverential practice (*satkṛtyābhyāsa*)
2. excellence of consequences (*phala-sampad*)
   (a) excellence in knowledge (*jñāna-sampad*)

  i. knowledge that was not imparted by others (*anupadiṣṭa-jñāna*)
  ii. awareness of all innate characteristics (*sarvatra-jñāna* = *niravaśeṣa-svalakṣaṇa-avabodhana*)
  iii. awareness of all forms (*sarvathā-jñāna* = *sarva-prakāra-avabodhana*)
  iv. knowing without effort (*ayatna-jñāna*)

(b) excellence in renunciation (*prahāṇa-sampad*)
  i. getting rid of all afflictions (*sarva-kleśa-prahāṇa*)
  ii. absolute (that is, irreversible) renunciation (*atyanta-prahāṇa*)
  iii. getting rid of afflictions along with their karmic roots (*savāsana-prahāṇa*)
  iv. getting rid of all obstacles to the attainment of concentration (*sarva-samādhi-samāpatty-āvaraṇa-prahāṇa*)

(c) excellence in power (*prabhāva-sampad*)
  i. excellence in the power to create, transform and control external objects (*bāhya-viṣaya-nirmāṇa-pariṇāmādhiṣṭhāna-vaśitva-sampad*)
  ii. excellence in the power to suspend and control the life force (*āyur-utsargādhiṣṭhāna-vaśitva-sampad*)
  iii. excellence in the power to travel through solid objects, or through the air, and to travel great distances quickly, and to make the body small or large (*āvṛtākāśa-dūra-kṣipra-gamanālpa-bahutva-praveśana-vaśitva-sampad*)
  iv. excellence in various natural and amazing virtues (*vividha-nijāścarya-dharma-sampad*)

(d) excellence in material body (*rūpa-kāya-sampad*)
  i. excellence in characteristics, that is, possession of the thirty-two major marks of a great man (*lakṣaṇa-sampad*)
  ii. excellence in secondary marks, that is, possession of the eight-four minor marks of a great man (*anuvyañjana-sampad*)
  iii. excellence in strength of character (*bala-sampad*)
  iv. excellence in having bones as hard as diamond (*vajra-sārāsthi-sampad*)

In his discussion of the Buddha's greatness, Dharmakīrti clearly follows Dignāga rather than Vasubandhu.

1.3.1 Knowledge is non-deceptive (vv. 3–6)

3. pramāṇam avisaṃvādi jñānam arthakriyāsthitiḥ
avisamvādanam śābde 'py abhiprāyanivedanāt

tshad ma bslu med can shes pa
don byed nus par gnas pa ni
mi slu sgra las byung ba yang
mngon par 'dod pa ston phyir ro

Knowledge is non-deceptive cognition. Non-deception consists in suitability[1] for the accomplishment of a purpose. Non-deception occurs even in the case of what is acquired through language, because it is a means of communicating the speaker's intention.

[1] Manorathanandin glosses *sthiti* as *yogyatā*.

In his discussion of the Buddha's authority, or his being a source of knowledge, Dharmakīrti first of all defines knowledge as a particular type of cognition, which is unlike such cognitions as beliefs, opinions, conjectures, wishes and hopes. What differentiates knowledge from these other types of cognition, according to Dharmakīrti, is that knowledge is a belief that does not deceive or cheat the person who holds it. To be more precise, if a person acts on a piece of knowledge, then the goal that prompted the person to act may be achieved. In contrast, if one acts on a belief or hope or wish, then the goal that prompted the action may not be achieved. This claim, that what distinguishes knowledge from other types of cognition is its capacity to enable a person to realize a goal (*artha-kriyā*), is not found in Dignāga's works on epistemology but is an innovation on Dharmakīrti's part. As we shall see later on, it is as innovation that leads into some philosophical difficulties.

The final topic that is mentioned in this opening definition of knowledge is one that will come up for more extended treatment later on in the text. The question of whether or not the words of inspired poets or prophets are a source of knowledge that cannot be acquired through ordinary experience or through reasoning was an important one in ancient India. It was an issue on which Buddhist philosophers consistently took a different stand from that of their Brahmanical adversaries. According to Dignāga, language is merely a particular kind of sign, one that is governed by social conventions. Generally speaking, a sign is an object that not only makes itself known directly but also serves to indicate something other than itself, usually something that is not within the range of the senses. Thus a body of smoke, to use the classical example, not only makes itself known but also indicates the presence of fire. In a similar way, a certain configuration of sounds deliberately articulated by a human speaker, is something that can be directly heard as a noise, but in addition it can serve to convey knowledge of something other than itself.

A question that Dignāga and other Buddhist philosophers asked was what kind of something other than itself a conventionally produced sound, such as a word or a sentence or a poem, can make known. In stating that "non-deception occurs even in the case of what is acquired through language," Dharmakīrti acknowledges that language is also capable of conveying knowledge. But the knowledge conveyed by language is a rather limited kind of knowledge, for spoken symbols indicate nothing more than the speaker's intentions (*abhiprāya*), that is, what the person who spoke the symbols wanted for someone else to hear. Thus if someone says "In order to enter into heaven in the next life it is necessary to hire a priest to perform a ritual," then whoever hears those words can know that the speaker wanted others to believe that hiring priests is necessary for those who wish to enter heaven. But what one cannot know for certain, at least on the basis of the spoken sentence, is whether or not it is really true that hiring priests is necessary for those who wish to enter heaven. There is the possibility, for example, that the sentence was spoken insincerely, for example by a disingenuous priest in search of a source of easy income. There is also the possibility that the sentence was spoken in all sincerity by someone who was mistaken about the real nature of things. So, although the sentence cannot by itself tell its hearer whether or not it is necessary to hire a priest to do rituals, it can tell its hearer that its speaker hoped that someone would believe that hiring priests is a necessity.

This entire discussion of linguistic symbols has been about spoken sounds rather than written signs, because written symbols are usually regarded as second-order signs; that is, a written word is a symbolic representation of a spoken word, which is itself a symbolic representation of an idea. And, given that systems of writing never perfectly convey all the subtleties that can be conveyed by the spoken languages that they represent, the written word is even less authoritative, less reliable as a guide to what is true, than a spoken sentence. It could be observed in general that the more times a sentence or text is transmitted from one person to another, or transferred from one medium to another, or translated from one language to another, the less likely it is that each successive copy faithfully represents the intentions of the original speaker.

The fact that a speaker's intentions are likely to become more distorted with each transmission, combined with the fact that the original message of the speaker may have been false in the first place, lead Buddhist thinkers such as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti to be suspicious of the authority that some people claimed for both scriptures and for traditions of texts that had been orally transmitted. For Dharmakīrti, who was writing well over a thousand years after the time of the Buddha, a question of central concern was whether all these observations, on account of which one might be suspicious of traditions in general, ought to make one suspicious of the traditional teachings of Buddhism in particular. How could Buddhists argue on the one hand that the Vedas and other authoritative texts recited by the Brahmans were only so much noise, while the texts recited by the Buddhists were "well-spoken" (*sūkta, subhāṣita*) and capable of inspiring the heart to become eager to undertake tasks as obviously thankless as that of writing a scholarly treatise on epistemology? This, as we shall see, is one of the principal questions treated in this text.

4. vaktṛvyāpāraviṣayo yo 'rtho buddhau prakāśate
   prāmāṇyaṃ tatra śabdasya nārthatattvanibandhanam

   smra ba po yi byed pa'i yul
   don gang blo la rab gsal ba
   de la sgra ni tshad ma nyid
   don gyi de nyid rgyu can min

   Language is a source of knowledge concerning the object that, being the subject matter of the speaker's efforts, appears in his mind. But language is not necessarily grounded in the object's reality.

As was said in the comments to verse 3, a spoken statement serves as a sign of no more than the desire of the speaker to influence the hearer to hold a particular belief. A spoken statement does not give a clear indication of what the speaker actually believes, since the speaker may be deliberately dissembling. And a spoken statement cannot give a clear indication of what is actually the case, since the speaker, even if not deliberately feigning beliefs, may hold beliefs that are counterproductive. Since speech has the capacity to transmit deception and error as well as accurate information, it is impossible to know about any one act of speech whether or not it is informative or misleading.

5. gṛhītagrahaṇān neṣṭaṃ sāṃvṛtam dhīpramāṇatā
   pravṛttes tatpradhānatvāt heyopādeyavastuni

   gzung ba 'dzin phyir kun rdzob ni
   mi 'dod blo ni tshad ma nyid
   blang dang dor bya'i dngos po yi
   'jug la de gtso yin phyir dang

6. viṣayākārabhedāc ca dhiyo 'dhigamabhedataḥ
   bhāvād evāsya tadbhāve svarūpasya svato gatiḥ

   yul rnam can ni tha dad pas
   blo yi rtogs pa tha dad phyir
   de yod na 'di yod phyir ro
   rang las rang gi ngo bo rtogs

   A subjective cognition is not regarded as a source of knowledge, because it consists in grasping what has already been grasped. Thought is a source of knowledge, because a) it is the principal source of action upon things that one should avoid and things that one should welcome, and b) perception of thought varies as the image of the subject matter varies, since the perception always occurs when the image is present. Its particularity is self-evident.

In verse 3 the point was made that knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is non-deceptive. In this verse the point is made that a source of knowledge must be that which provides a belief that is not only non-deceptive but also new. Note that the Sanskrit word "pramāṇa" has two distinct but related meanings: a) knowledge, as discussed in verse 2, and b) a source of knowledge, or an authority, that is, a means of acquiring knowledge.[2] It is the latter sense that is under discussion in verse 5. Manorathanandin states that, according to Dharmakīrti, subjective or covert (*sāṃvṛta*) cognitions are those that have come about as a result of pondering alternatives and then arriving at a decision. Strictly speaking, deliberation of this kind cannot be considered a source of new knowledge, since deliberation is simply a process of reflecting on that of which one has become aware through sensation. Thus the only *source* of knowledge, that is, the only means of acquiring new knowledge, is sensation. That notwithstanding, judgement or inference cannot be dismissed. On the contrary, reflection is the only available means of determining which course of action a person should take.

Like most Buddhist thinkers, Dharmakīrti distinguishes between two "levels of truth." He explicitly correlates these two levels of truth with the two types of cognition recognized by Dignāga. Thus according to Dharmakīrti, truth "in the highest sense" (*paramārtha*) is that which leads to nirvana, which is the ultimate goal (*paramārtha*), and this truth is restricted to the realm of pure sensation (pratyakṣa). But there are, in addition, "covert" (saṃvṛti) cognitions that are essentially private and idiosyncratic in nature; these private and essentially subjective beliefs are called "covert" for two

[2]The various senses of the word *pramāṇa* will be discussed further on 15.

reasons: 1) because they are concealed from others and 2) because they conceal reality from the person who holds them. These covert cognitions belong exclusively to the realm of judgement.

The value of sensation is that it alone can reveal how things really are. But sensation cannot reveal anything further than that, such as which course of action is most likely to lead to the fulfillment of one's purposes. The value of reasoning (*anumāna*) is that it can provide information as to which courses of action one ought to avoid and which courses of action one ought to pursue in order to arrive at a given goal.

In saying that the identifying form of a thought is self-evident, Dharmakīrti is following Dignāga's tenet that what distinguishes a particular act of awareness from other acts of awareness is its subject matter. What distinguishes, for example, the act of being aware of a patch of blue from the act of being aware of a B♭ tone, is just the fact that one cognition is about a particular colour and the other is about a particular noise. The contents of a cognition give the cognition its particular identity (*svarūpa*), and each cognition is, according to Dignāga, aware not only of its subject matter but also of its own identity as a cognition about that subject matter. Since the awareness of a noise is aware of itself as being about noise, it takes no further cognitions to determine what the cognition of noise is about. In that sense, the identity of a cognition is self-evident (*svato gata*).[3]

One further point to understand about a cognition's self-awareness is that a cognition's awareness of its own identity is knowledge, even if the cognition itself does not correspond to reality. Thus, for example, if one imagines flowers growing in the sky, the identity of that cognition is flowers in the sky. A person would not be mistaken in believing that he is thinking about flowers in the sky, although he might be mistaken if he were to believe that there really are flowers in the sky to be thought about. This point is an important one for Dharmakīrti, for it enables him to hold the view that one can have very real beliefs about such things as God that do not really exist at all outside the human imagination. This enables Dharmakīrti to argue against some followers of the Nyāya tradition, who argued that to be the subject matter of a cognition is to be real, and therefore one cannot even deny that God exists without affirming that there exists a God about whose existence one may entertain doubts.

7ab. prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahāreṇa śāstraṃ mohanivartanam

tha snyad las ni tshad ma nyid
bstan bcos rmongs pa zlog byed yin

That something is a source of knowledge [is known] through practical matters. A scholarly work is a means of removing confusion.

It was the view of some schools of Indian philosophy, such as the Mīmāṃsā, that the various criteria (*pramāṇa*) by which knowledge can be separated from belief are self-justifying. According to this view, there is no need to justify the opinion that sensation

[3] For a more detailed discussion of the reasoning behind Dignāga's view, see Hayes 1988, pp. 140–142.

is a source of knowledge, because this is self-evidently true. Similarly, it is supposed to be self-evident that inferential reasoning is a process that leads to knowledge, and so there is no need to seek proof for the belief that inference is a source of knowledge. Morever, in the opinion of most Brahmanical thinkers, scriptural tradition (*āgama*) is a source of knowledge that it would be impossible to acquire either through sensation or through reasoning. Dharmakīrti rejects this Brahmanical view and states instead that no belief, no matter how it is acquired, is justified unless it is capable of passing the practical test of yielding expected results.

In following this essentially pragmatic model, it is perhaps less appropriate to use the terms "true" and "false" of beliefs than to use such expressions as "effective" or "productive" and "ineffective" or "counterproductive." When talking of truth or falsity, one is normally talking of a relation between an internal, mental event—a belief—and an external, non-mental event—a state of affairs. When talking of effectiveness, on the other hand, one is talking of a relation between two internal events, namely, one's own desire and one's own perception as to whether that desire has been satisfied. The supposed advantage of speaking in this pragmatic way instead of in terms of truth and falsity is that effectiveness can be known through introspection, by simply looking at whether or not one's expectations have in fact been fulfilled by a certain course of action. Truth or falsity, on the other hand, can never be determined with certainty, since one can never get outside one's own perceptions to determine whether or not they correspond to external realities.

Note that Dharmakīrti does not hold that the pragmatic test need actually be applied to every belief to determine whether or not it is practicable. If one believes, for example, that a particular fire is producing enough heat to boil water, it is not necessary to put this belief to the test in order to have confidence in its feasibility. One can draw on one's experience of previous fires to draw conclusions about this fire. If one has had the experience before that fires of a this magnitude generated enough heat to boil water, then one can reasonably believe that this fire also has that capacity. What is important about Dharmakīrti's pragmatic criterion for beliefs is that there are some kinds of beliefs that can never pass the test of practical experience, namely, beliefs about things that have never before been part of one's experience. Examples of such beliefs are the Brahmanical doctrine that the result of doing one's social and religious duties (*dharma*) will be entry into heaven, and various doctrines about the beginning and the end of the world.

In contrast to some of the beliefs of Brahmans, which can never pass a practical test, Dharmakīrti argues that the key doctrines taught by the Buddha can be put to a practical test in this life, and indeed have passed the practical test in the lives of a sufficient number of other people that one can have confidence in them even if one has not tested them thoroughly for oneself. Seeing that others have experienced an extinction (*nirvāṇa*) of the basic causes of their discontent, for example, is grounds for believing that nirvana is indeed possible to attain. According to Dharmakīrti, then, the belief in nirvana is, unlike the Brahman's belief in heaven, reasonable to hold, even for a person who has not yet experienced nirvana first hand. The function of a scholarly work (*śāstra*) is to help its reader remove misconceptions about which beliefs are worth pursuing and which are not.

This concludes the discussion of the first part of the definition of knowledge, namely, that knowledge is non-deceptive. The next topic for discussion is that a source of knowledge is that which presents new information.

1.3.2 A source of knowledge presents new information (vv. 7–8)

7cd. ajñātārthaprakāśo vā svarūpādhigateḥ paraṃ

ma shes don gyi gsal byed kyang
rang gi ngo bo rtogs 'og tu

8. prāptaṃ sāmānyavijñānam avijñāte svalakṣaṇe
yajjñānam ity abhiprāyāt svalakṣaṇavicārataḥ

spyi yi rnam par shes pa thob
rang gi mtshan nyid mi shes pa
shes pa gang yin zhes dgongs phyir
rang gi mtshan nyid dpyad phyir ro

Moreover, [a source of knowledge is] the disclosure of a previously unrecognized fact. The awareness of a universal that occurs after the perception of a particularity is included [in this description], because the intention is a cognition that is about a previously uncognized particular, because investigation is of particulars.

The Sanskrit word "pramāṇa" is formed from the root $\sqrt{}$**mā** (to measure) plus the prefix **pra-** and the morphological suffix **-ana** to which Pāṇini gave the encoded name LYUṬ. Pāṇini observed (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 3 : 3.113, 115, 117) that words formed in **-ana** may be verbal nouns that simply name an action, or they may be instrumental nouns that name the means or the instrument by which an action is performed. In keeping with Pāṇini's observations, the word "pramāṇa" is capable of conveying two different but related meanings. First, as we have seen, it can be used to mean knowledge itself. And second it can be used to mean that by which knowledge is acquired. Up to this point, Dharmakīrti has been speaking of the term "pramāṇa" used in the first sense, but in verse 8 he shifts the focus of discussion to the second sense. For, as we shall see in verse 9, it is in the sense of being an instrument of knowing, or a means by which other people can acquire knowledge, that the Buddha is called a *pramāṇa.*

A source of knowledge, says Dharmakīrti, is the disclosure—literally, the process of bringing to light (*prakāśa*)—a previously unrecognized fact. According to Manorathanandin, the word "fact (*artha*)" serves the purpose of excluding such erroneous cognitions as sensory illusions; although illusions may be new cognitions, they are also misleading and therefore not knowledge. And the word "unrecognized (*ajñāta*)" serves the purpose of excluding conventional (*sāṃvṛta*) judgements, which have as their subject matter collections of parts, such as forming the judgement "this is a woman" after seeing a certain arrangement of coloured shapes. The reasoning behind excluding judgements of this kind is that the particular instances of colour and shape that one

directly sees are new data that one is becoming aware of for the very first time through the act of seeing, whereas the judgement that follows after the act of vision is the mental processing of already existing data. Moreover, each of the sensory channels brings a distinct kind of data, and there is not necessarily any connection between what one sees through the eye and what one smells through the nose or hears through the ears. The function of the intellect is to impose a unity upon a set of discrete data. A certain arrangement of coloured shapes, accompanied by a certain range of sounds and a particular collection of scents, all give rise to the judgement “this is a woman.” But since this judgement is built up of old data, it is not a new cognition and therefore not an instance of acquiring new knowledge. Similarly, memories are excluded by the phrase “unrecognized,” since they too are simply reviewing already recognized facts.

From the preceding discussion, one might draw the conclusion that all forms of mental processing of sensory data fall outside the process of disclosing a previously unrecognized fact. If that were the case, then all acts of judgement or inference (*anumāna*) would fall outside the scope of Dharmakīrti’s definition of a source of knowledge, since Dharmakīrti accepts Dignāga’s conclusion that all acts of the intellect have general characteristics (*sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*) rather than particular characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*) as their subject matter. But it is not Dharmakīrti’s intention to rule out all acts of classification. When one senses a particular sensory stimulus and then recognizes that the stimulus belongs to the class of things that are impermanent, ultimately unsatisfactory and therefore nothing worth becoming attached to, then one is arriving at a new and legitimate piece of information. This new judgement is still about the particular data of which one has become newly aware through sensation; it is not about an object, such as a “woman,” that the mind has constructed by using the raw material of several discrete kinds of data.

In the traditional language of abhidharma, when one draws conclusions about the characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) that belong to all simple properties (*dharma*), one is still acquiring knowledge about facts of the world, but when one begins to draw conclusions about the kinds of complex object that the mind constructs out of simple and irreducible properties, then one is engaged in the fabrication of vain concepts rather than in acquiring useful knowledge. It is Dharmakīrti’s intention, in laying out his theory of knowledge, to remain consistent with this traditionally Buddhist view. Those who are intent upon achieving a goal, says Manorathanandin, focus their investigation (*vicāra*) solely on simple particular data (*svalakṣaṇa*), since these alone have the potential to fulfil one’s purposes. For this reason, all knowledge, according to Dharmakīrti, is about simple data. Cognitions about universals are knowledge only when one is putting simple data into classes, not when one is putting complex objects into classes.

1.4 The Buddha’s authority (v. 9)

9. tadvat pramāṇaṃ bhagavān abhūtanivṛttaye
bhūtoktiḥ sādhanāpekṣā tato yuktā pramāṇatā

de ldan bcom ldan tshad ma nyid
ma skyes pa ni bzlog don du

> *gyur pa nyid gsungs de yi phyir*
> *sgrub byed la ltos tshang yin rigs*
>
> **The Lord is the latter kind of a source of knowledge. The statement "he has become" is to rule out that he is unborn. Therefore his being a source of knowledge rightly requires demonstration.**

If Buddhists regard the Buddha as an authority, the question naturally arises as to what kind of source of knowledge he is thought to be. According to Manorathanandin, Dharmakīrti holds that the Lord (*bhagavant*) Buddha is a source of knowledge in that second sense of the term, that is, in the sense of being one who disclosed what had not previously been recognized. But the Buddhists' claim for the authority of the Buddha is not quite like the claims that Brahmans made for the authority of the Vedas.

Followers of the Mīmāṃsā school argued that all epistemic criteria, including the Vedas, are self-verifying. In contrast to their view, other Brahmanical thinkers, such as the Naiyāyikas, believed that the authority of the Vedas had to be demonstrated. According to this latter view, it is not necessary to verify each and every statement in the Vedas independently; rather, one can establish that the Vedas as a whole are trustworthy. Once this principle has been demonstrated, then one can be confident in the truth of each independent statement in the Vedas.

Since the Buddha's authority cannot be taken for granted, it must be established. Dharmakīrti's claim about the trustworthiness of the words of the Buddha is more similar to the Naiyāyika's claim about the trustworthiness of the Vedas. It is not necessary to verify each and every statement by the Buddha; rather, it will suffice to establish that the Buddha is credible in general. But Dharmakīrti's method of establishing the trustworthiness of the Buddha is different from the method used by the Brahmins to establish the trustworthiness of the Vedas. Whereas the Brahmins claim that the Vedas are true because they come from an eternal and changeless god (*īśvara*), the Buddhists do not claim that the Buddha is eternal. On the contrary, the Buddha, like all other things, came into being and then eventually passed away. This emphasis on the Buddha's being born and therefore being impermanent, says Dharmakīrti, is what lay behind Dignāga's use of the expression "who has become a source of knowledge (*pramāṇa-bhūta*)" in his opening verse of dedication, which is discussed above on page 7.

Chapter 2

Denying Divine Knowledge

2.1 Arguments against divine authority (vv. 10–11)

It was established in verse 9 at the end of the previous chapter that the Buddha’s authority lay in the fact that he was born rather than eternal. Verses 10 and 11 enumerate several reasons why a supposedly permanent being, such as God (*īśvara*) or the Veda cannot be a source of knowledge.

10. nityaṃ pramāṇaṃ naivāsti prāmāṇyād vastusadgateḥ
    jñeyānityatayā tasyā adhrauvyāt kramajanmanām

    tshad ma rtag pa nyid yod min dngos yod rtogs pa tshad phyir dang shes bya mi rtag pa nyid kyis de ni mi brtan nyid phyir ro rim bzhin skye ba can dag ni

11. nityād utpattiviśleṣād apekṣāyā ayogataḥ
    kathañcin nopakāryatvād anitye ’py apramāṇatā

    rtag las skye ba mi ’thad phyir ltos pa mi rung ba yi phyir rnam ’gas phan gdags bya min phyir mi rtag na yang tshad med nyid

    There is no permanent source of knowledge [such as God], because knowledge is the cognition of the presence of an actuality. Such cognition is unstable, because what it can cognize is impermanent. And because the birth of that which is born in a sequence is disconnected from what is permanent. And because no dependence is possible since he is in no way capable of being assisted. Even if [God is] impermanent, he is no source of knowledge.

Prajñākaragupta points out that someone might argue that since both sense experience and reason are fallible (*paramāṇa*), the only source of knowledge is either an eternal

and omniscient knower such as God, or an impersonal repository of eternal truths such as the Veda. Countering this view, Prajñākaragupta represents Dharmakīrti as arguing that every act of awareness is necessarily impermanent, because no act of awareness can endure longer than the object of which it is aware; since there are no permanent objects of awareness, there can be no permanent awareness. But if awareness is impermanent, then it cannot be part of a permanent knower, since if acts of awareness were really part of the fabric of the knower, he would undergo some change as a result of his every act of awareness coming into being and then fading away.

One could argue, says Prajñākaragupta, that Dharmakīrti's argument poses a problem only if one presupposes that God is the agent of his own knowledge, for agency implies some deliberation before each action, and each that an agent performs therefore results in some change within the agent. But what if one were to suppose that God is not the agent of each of the successive moments in his serial awareness? Suppose instead that each moment of awareness acts as an assistant (*upakāra = sahakārin*) in the production of God's knowledge. But if one supposes all that, says Prajñākaragupta, then why speak of God at all? Why not simply speak, as the Buddhists do, of individual acts of awareness disconnected from any permanent agent of knowledge?

Suppose now that one were to abandon the notion that God is permanent. Even if God is impermanent, says Prajñākaragupta, he is not usually described by theists in a way that indicates that he could be an authority on the kinds of things that are of real importance to a person trying to become free of the world of suffering. God is usually described as being and as always having been free of passions. But if God has never experienced the passions that keep people bound to the world of birth and death, then how could he possibly know from his own experience how to become free of those passions? Never having suffered from passions, God would be in no position to have compassion (*karuṇā*) for those who do. The Buddha, on the other hand, was once a passionate man and became liberated of his passions. This makes him uniquely qualified to have sympathy with those who have passions, and it enables him to have the kind of experience whereby he can explain to those who are as he used to be how they can become free as he eventually did.

2.2 Criticism of arguments for the existence of God

2.2.1 Criticism of Nyāya school's position (vv. 12–18)

The Naiyāyikas and other theists devised numerous arguments for the existence of a single supreme intelligence who was responsible for putting the world into order and maintaining it. In the next verse, Dharmakīrti alludes to three of those arguments. First, it is argued that any object that undergoes action after being at rest (*sthitvā pravṛtti*) must be put into motion by something outside itself. Manorathanandin gives the example of the shuttle (*turī*) on a loom, while Prajñākaragupta gives that of an ax. If being in motion were an intrinsic quality of the shuttle or the ax, then it would be perpetually in motion. So whatever is responsible for putting an object into motion must be in some way external to the object itself. Moreover, it can be observed that an instrument such as an ax can perform the activity of splitting only when it is moved by an intelligent

mover. Similarly, if one considers the world as a whole, it must have been put into motion by an intelligent mover. A second argument is that everything that has been created has the particular configuration (*saṃsthānaviśeṣa*) it has owing to the intentions of its maker. An earthenware pot or a building, for example, is given a particular shape according to the particular function for which it is designed. Similarly, the world as a whole must have been given its particular form by its designer. Third, anything that accomplishes a purpose (*arthakriyākārin*) must have been created to meet the needs of an intelligent being whose purpose is fulfilled by the object in question.

In the next verse, Dharmakīrti states his view that that none of these arguments is compelling.

12. sthitvā pravṛttisaṃsthānaviśeṣārthakriyādiṣu
iṣṭasiddhiḥ asiddhir vā dṛṣṭānte saṃśayo' thavā

sdod 'jug dbyibs kyi khyad par dang
don byed pa la sogs pa dag
'dod pa grub pa'am dpe ma grub
yang na the tshom za ba yin

With respect to action after resting, particular configuration, accomplishment of a purpose and so forth, this is establishing what is accepted. Either there is a lack of attestment with respect to the observed precedent, or uncertainty.

Prajñākaragupta understands the phrase "establishing what is accepted" (*iṣṭasiddhiḥ*) to mean that Dharmakīrti is accusing the theists of using an argument that assumes the truth of the very thing that needs to be established. Arguing that the world was once at rest and then was put into motion, for example, assumes that the world was created; but that is precisely the issue that is under dispute here. Similarly, arguing that the world's configuration is conducive to the needs of its designer or that it fulfills someone's purposes already assumes that the world has a designer; but that is precisely what the Buddhist question.

Manorathanandin, on the other hand, understands the phrase "establishing what is accepted" to mean that Dharmakīrti is accusing the theists of establishing what everyone accepts. No one denies that the world is the product of intelligence. The Buddhists also accept that the world is the result of intelligent manipulation. But what the Buddhists deny is that the world is the product of a *single* intelligence, for there is no proof of the singularity of the maker (*kartur ekatvāsiddhiḥ*). The Buddhists would have no difficulty accepting that the world has the configuration it has because it constantly being reshaped by countless millions of human beings, animals, birds, insects and other beings, each of which has some intelligence.

In any event, what the theist is trying to establish by these arguments is that there is an eternal and omniscient intelligence who acted as creator of the phenomenal world.

But all of the examples given—shuttles, axes and pots—are products made by human beings, and human beings are neither eternal nor omniscient. Therefore, the thing to be established is not exemplified by the precedents given by the theists. Moreover, it is uncertain whether one of the examples is even applicable; it is not obvious that the world is fulfilling any purpose, so it is uncertain whether the world as a whole is comparable to a product such as a shuttle, a pot or an ax.

13. siddhaṃ yādṛg adhiṣṭhātṛbhāvābhāvānuvṛttimat
sanniveśādi; tad yuktam tasmād yad anumīyate

byin rlabs yod med rjes 'jug can
dbyibs sogs ci 'dra rab grub pa
de las rjes su dpog gang yin
de ni rigs pa nyid yin no

A certain pattern that has particular qualities is established to follow the presence or absence of a superintendent. Whatever is inferred from that is correct.

In the case of a complex object, such as a pot, with a given set of characteristics, such as being wide-mouthed, one knows that the object comes into existence when there is an intelligent creator and that it does not come into existence when there is not. That being the case, when one observes a pot, one can be sure that there was a potter who made it. But all potters are human beings. And therefore all that one can reasonably infer from the existence of a pot is that there must have been a human potter who made it. But one cannot extend this analogy to conclude with certainty from the very fact that the world exists that it also has an intelligent creator.

14. vastubhede prasiddhasya śabdasāmyād abhedinaḥ
na yuktānumitiḥ pāṇḍudravyād iva hutāśane

tha dad dngos la rab grub pa
sgra mtshungs tha dad med pa'i phyir
rjes dpog rigs pa ma yin te
skye bo'i rdzas las me bzhin no

An inference is not correct on the basis of what is similar owing to its having the same name as what is attested in a particular thing; for example, [the inference] of fire from a whitish substance [is incorrect].

Suppose that a person has observed that a fire has produced a cloud of whitish smoke. Suppose that the person then observes some other whitish substance, such as a lump of chalk, and on the basis of the similarity in colour comes to the conclusion that the white chalk, like the white smoke, must have been produced by a fire. Such a line of reasoning is obviously invalid, since it falsely assumes that the whiteness in the chalk had the same cause as the whiteness in the smoke. Prajñākaragupta notes that an inference of fire might be correct if it is based on a particular whitish colour that is peculiar to smoke, but in this case it is the still the fact that it is specifically the white of smoke that makes the inference correct, and not the mere fact that it is white in general.

The argument for the existence of a divine creator is invalid in just the same way as the inference of fire from white in general. In this case, one has observed that a pot is an object to which the word "configuration" can be applied and that it was assembled by a potter. And it is then observed that a mountain is also an object to which the word "configuration" can be applied. On the basis of the fact that the same general word can be used to describe a pot and a mountain, the conclusion is drawn that the mountain is the same as the pot in that both have a specific kind of configuration, namely, one that was produced by an intelligent creator. But such a conclusion is unwarranted.

15. anyathā kumbhakāreṇa mṛdvikārasya kasyacit
ghaṭādeḥ karaṇāt sidhyed valmīkasyāpi tatkṛtiḥ

de lta min na rdza mkhan gyis
bum pa la sogs 'jim pa yi
rnam 'gyur 'ga' zhig byed pa'i phyir
grog mkhar yang des byas grub 'gyur

Otherwise, one could establish that since some pot, which is a transformation of clay, is a creation by a potter, then an anthill must also be a creation by him.

If it were correct to infer that a particular characteristic belonging to a particular member of a class belonged to all members of that class, then it would be correct to conclude that an anthill was created by a potter, since it too has a configuration consisting of earth. In this case, the particular characteristic of the pot, namely, that it is made by a potter, is assumed to apply to all members of the class of things that are made of earth, and the conclusion reached by such reasoning is obviously false. But if one assumes that everything that is made of earth must have had an intelligent maker just because pots have intelligent makers, one is committing the same logical blunder.

In his commentary to this verse, Prajñākaragupta anticipates the objection that Dharmakīrti's argument is easily answered by pointing out that one actually sees the clay being molded by a potter, whereas one does not see anthills being formed by a potter, so it would not be tempting to conclude that an anthill was the creation of a potter. But, says, Prajñākaragupta, this line of reasoning also undermines the hypothesis that the

world was created by a divine creator, since one has never such a creator at work. To this the creationist might reply that the actions of the creator are invisible. But, says Prajñākaragupta, once one allows that the world might have had an invisible creator, there is no assurance that the invisible creator was not himself the creation of another invisible creator who was himself the product of yet another invisible creator and so on without end. And so, if the goal is to establish that the world had a creator who is himself uncreated and therefore imperishable, that conclusion has not been convincingly proven.

16. sādhyenānugamāt kārye sāmānyenāpi sādhane
sambandhibhedād bhedoktidoṣaḥ kāryasamo mataḥ

bsgrub bya'i rjes 'gro phyir 'bras bu
spyis kyang sgrub par byed pa la
'brel pa can nyid tha dad phyir
tha dad skyon brjod 'bras mtshungs 'dod

The error of referring to a particular is supposed to be found equally in the effect, because in a demonstration by means of a similarity in the effect based on being pervaded by what is to be established, there is a difference in the relata.

In the previous verse, the point was made that not all things that are transformations of clay are made by potters; in other words, the property "being a transformation of clay" is not pervaded by the property "being made by a potter". The general point is that it is an error in reasoning to assume that a specific property belonging to a particular instance of a general property applies equally to all other possessors of that general property.

According to Prajñākaragupta, the present verse refers to an accusation made by the Naiyāyika philosophers, who claimed that Dignāga had been guilty of making this very error when he presented the following argument in the *Hetucakra* as a canonical example of sound reasoning: "All language is impermanent, because it is produced through human effort."The Naiyāyikas, who are committed to defending the thesis that the language of the Veda was produced not by human beings but by the supreme lord (*īśvara*), argue that Dignāga has falsely assumed that everything that is an effect (*kārya*) is necessarily produced by human effort (*prayatnānantarīyaka*). On the basis of observing that pots are effects and that their production is preceded by human effort, Dignāga has concluded that everything that has the general property of being an effect must also have the specific property of being produced by human effort. But, say the Naiyāyikas, there are various ways in which something can be an effect; it can either be produced by human effort, or its existence can simply be made manifest (*abhivyakta*). The statements of the Veda are effects in this latter sense, for what we call their coming into being was in fact simply their existence being brought to light.

The objection by the Naiyāyika, says Prajñākaragupta, does not really matter, since whether one understands an effect as a product or as a manifestation, the fact remains that all effects of every kind are impermanent. So even if one concedes that the Veda is a manifestation instead of a product, the fact that it is an effect precludes its being permanent.

17. jātyantare prasiddhasya śabdasāmānyadarśanāt
na yuktaṃ sādhanaṃ gotvād vāgādīnām viṣāṇivat

rigs kyi khyad par la grub pa
sgra yi spyi ni mthong ba las
sgrub byed mi rigs ngag la sogs
go nyid phyir na rab can bzhin

A demonstration based on the observation that a similar expression for a well known thing [is applicable] to another class of things is not correct. For example, [the demonstration] that things such as language have horns because they have the nature of a cow [is faulty].

Manorathanandin suggests that someone might argue as follows: an object to which the word "pattern" applies is known to belong to the class of things produced by intelligence when the object being considered is a pot, and that object is also observed to have physical extension, like the universe as a whole; therefore, it is unreasonable to doubt that the universe, which is another species of the genus of objects to which the word "pattern" applies, is not produced by an intelligent maker. In order to show that this line of reasoning is faulty, Dharmakīrti offers a counterexample. Not everything that has the nature of a cow has horns. Dharmakīrti's example is based on a pun or an ambiguity in Sanskrit that cannot easily be captured in English translation. The Sanskrit word for cow is "go", which is said by traditional grammarians to be a verbal noun derived from the verb $\sqrt{}$**gam** ($\Rightarrow$ **gacchati**), which means "to go." In accordance with conventional usage, however, this same Sanskrit word for cow can be applied to several other kinds of things that move: language, the stars, the sky, light beams, diamonds, arrows, the earth, women, water, the sense organs, the sun, the moon, body hair, and the number nine. So the mere fact that something can be called "go" clearly does not imply that it has horns like a cow.[1]

[1]The Tibetan translator also had difficulty with this and chose simply to adopt the Sanskrit word "go" instead of trying to translate it. The flavour of this argument could be captured in English by choosing a word that, like the Sanskrit "go" can apply to several different kinds of object. The following sentence has approximately the same properties as Dharmakīrti's argument: "For example, [the demonstration] that things such as gaskets have whiskers because they have the nature of a seal [is faulty]."

18. vivakṣāparatantratvān na śabdāḥ santi kutra vā
tadbhāvād arthasiddhau tu sarvaṃ sarvasya sidhyati

rjod par 'dod pa'i gzhan dbang phyir
sgra rnams gang la'ang med ma yin
de yod pas ni don grub na
thams cad kyis ni thams cad grub

Because they depend on what the speaker wishes to say, to what are expressions not applicable? But if the conclusion is established by their presence, everything is established for everyone.

Manorathanandin offers no comments in explanation of this cryptic verse except to say that this concludes Dharmakīrti's criticisms of the arguments for the existence of God. Prajñākaragupta explains that there is nothing to which these equivocal expressions do not apply, since there are no restraints on the speaker's intentions. And if, because there are no restraints in the use of terms, whatever conclusion one wishes to establish is established automatically, then no one should experience any difficulty in making his case.

In summary, the Naiyāyika argument for the existence of God on the evidence of patterns in nature can be shown to be a case of begging the question. Since patterns may occur either spontaneously or by design, it is unwarranted to assume that patterns in nature occur as a result of the efforts of an intelligent designer. If one ignores the ambiguity in words such as "pattern" and takes them only in the sense that serves one's own position, then one must allow everyone else to use the same strategy, with the result that everyone will be able effortlessly to establish whatever conclusion he wishes.

2.2.2 Criticism of Sāṃkhya school's position (vv. 19–22)

19. etena kāpilādīnām acaitanyādi cintitam
anityādeś ca caitanyaṃ maraṇāt tvagapohataḥ

'dis ni ser skya la sogs kyi
mi rtag sogs phyir yang sems med
sogs dang shun pa bshus na ni
'chi phyir sems ldan dpyad pa yin

By this [same method] are examined Kāpila's [view of] insentience on the grounds of impermanence and so forth, and [the Digambara Jain view of] sentience on the grounds of shedding the skin due to death.

The philosopher Kapīla, and other members of the Sāṃkhyā school of philosophy, argued that because the intellect as well as such feelings as pleasure and pain are impermanent, they must belong to the material world rather than to the eternal world

of pure spirit (*puruṣa*); being part of the material world, they reasoned, the intellect and feelings must lack the quality of consciousness, which belongs to the spirit alone. According to Dharmakīrti, this line of reasoning is flawed by the same fallacy as the arguments for the existence of God, namely, the fallacy of assuming that because the same word, in this case "impermanence," can apply to several things, those things all share a common quality, in this case the quality of being insentient.

The Digambara Jaina philosophers argued that since trees and other plants share with animals the custom of shedding their skins after they die, plants are also sentient beings. This argument is flawed in the same way as the argument for the existence of God and the argument for the insentience of the intellect and feelings.

20. vastusvarūpe 'siddhe 'yaṃ nyāyaḥ siddhe viśeṣaṇam
abādhakam asiddhāv apy ākāśāśrayavad dhvaneḥ

dngos po'i ngo bo ma grub na
tshul 'di grub na ma grub kyang
khyad par gnod byed ma yin te
sgra yi nam mkha' la brten bzhin

This is the method when the nature of a thing has not been established. When the nature of an object has been established, its particular attribute, such as sound's being supported by ether, does not counter [that nature], even when there is nothing to attest to it.

The method that Dharmakīrti has used to criticize the arguments for the existence of a creator is effective only when the nature of the thing over which there is a controversy has not been established. Then the most effective strategy is to draw attention to the fact that a thing has not been established and to question underlying assumptions. Since God is supposed even by those who believe in him to be outside the range of human experience, the nature of God cannot be known. The believer in God must appeal to various kinds of indirect proof to establish his existence. These indirect proofs can always be challenged by showing the ambiguity of key expressions and questioning presuppositions; this method is sufficient to show that the arguments being criticized are not conclusive. In contrast to the controversy about whether the world is the creation of a single intelligent maker, in which qualities of this supposed maker can only be assumed, there are controversies about topics whose existence can be established. Sound, for example, is established through sensation, so there is no doubt that it exists. Moreover, it can be established that sounds are produced, so that this property of sound—the fact that it is a product—can be used as evidence for other properties of sound, such as the fact that it must also be impermanent. These properties of sound, which are established through sensation and sound reasoning, cannot be overthrown by any other considerations. For example, the contention of most non-Buddhist thinkers that sound is a quality (*guṇa*) of the ether (*ākāśa*)—a contention that is not accepted by

Buddhists—cannot overturn the conclusions that have been arrived at by sensation and sound reasoning.

21. asiddhāv api śabdasya siddhe vastuni siddhyati
    aulūkyasya yathā bauddhenoktaṃ mūrttyādisādhanam

    sgra ma grub kyang dngos po ni
    grub na grub par 'gyur te dper
    'ug pa pa la sangs rgyas pas
    lus sogs sgrub byed bshad pa bzhin

    Even if there is no agreement about an expression, [a conclusion] is established, provided that a thing is established, as for example the demonstration of the corporeal and so forth stated by a Buddhist [in response] to Aulūkya.

Prajñākaragupta and Manorathanandin explain that Aulūkya *alias* Kaṇāda, founder of the Vaiśeṣika school, argues that atoms are impermanent, because they are corporeal. Vaiśeṣikas hold that corporeality means the dimensions of an object that is spatially delimited, whereas the Buddhists claim that corporeality means being tangible. In this case, the Vaiśeṣikas and the Buddhists may disagree about how best to define corporeality, but they agree on the fact that there are material substances and on the natures that material substances have.

22. tasyāiva vyabhicārādau śabde'py avyabhicāriṇi
    doṣavat sādhanaṃ jñeyaṃ vastuno vastusiddhitaḥ

    de nyid 'khrul la sogs yin na
    sgra ni 'khrul pa med na yang
    sgrub byed skyed ldan shes bya ste
    dngos las dngos po grub phyir ro

    When that [thing] is erratic and so forth, even when the expression is not erratic, a demonstration should be known to be faulty, because a thing is established through thing.

When the thing that is being used as evidence is erratic or unattested or points to a conclusion imcompatible with the conclusion that one hopes to reach, then a demonstration based on that thing is faulty, even though the expression is not erratic. This is so, because demonstration of one thing is through another thing rather than through an expression. Reasoning, in other words, must be understood as being about things rather than about the expressions that name things; that a similar expression can be used of several objects does not allow one to draw any conclusions unless the expressions are referring to exactly the same states of affairs.

2.3 Arguments against the existence of God (vv. 23–30)

23. yathā tat kāraṇaṃ vastu tathāiva tadakāraṇam
yadā tat kāraṇaṃ kena mataṃ neṣṭam akāraṇam

ji ltar dngos de rgyu yin pa
de lta de nyid gang gi tshe
rgyu min gang gis de ni rgyur
'dod la rgyu ma yin mi 'dod

That thing is exactly the same way when it is not a cause as when it is a cause. When it is a cause, by what is it supposed to be so? Why is it not regarded as a non-cause?

According to those who believe that the world was created by God, God is an eternal being. But nothing that undergoes any kind of change can be eternal. And this means that if God is truly eternal, then he cannot be any different at any moment of his existence from how he is at any other moment of his existence. This means that there can be no change in God that would distinguish how he was before he created the world from how he was after the creation. It is known in general that when a particular object participates in an action, it undergoes some kind of change—either a change in place, or a change in quality. Since an eternal God cannot undergo changes, it is impossible that he participate in any actions, such as that of creating the universe or making things known to human beings through revelation.

24. śastrāuṣadhābhisambandhāc caitrasya vraṇarohaṇe
asambaddhasya kiṃ sthāṇoḥ kāraṇatvaṃ na kalpyate

mtshon dang sman sogs 'brel ba las
nag pa'i rma dang 'drubs yin na
'brel med sdong dum ci yi phyir
rgyu nyid du ni rtog mi byed

Owing to his contact with a weapon or with medicines, Caitra gets [respectively] wounded or healed. But why is an immovable object that is dissociated [from activity] not considered to be a cause?

If a mortal human being such as Caitra is attacked with a weapon, he will sustain injuries. If medicines are applied to his injuries, they will heal. Undergoing such changes is what characterizes being engaged in actions. But God is supposed not to be capable of change, and therefore he cannot be engaged in activity. And whatever is not engaged in activity cannot be a cause. Therefore God cannot be considered the cause of the world.

25. svabhāvabhedena vinā vyāpāro ’pi na yujyate
nityasyāvyatirekitvāt sāmarthyaṃ ca duranvayam

rang bzhin khyad par med par ni
byed par yang ni mi rung ngo
rtag la ldog pa med pa’i phyir
nus pa nyid kyang rtogs par dka’

Not even effort is possible without a change in nature. Since a permanent thing is unchanging, its capacity to act is hard to comprehend.

Not only can a permanent being not actually create anything, suggests Manorathanandin, but it cannot even try to do anything, for even the mental effort necessary to form an intention to act requires some change in the being, namely, the change involved in going from the state of not having an intention to the state of having it. Since effort is the cause of action, an effort, or an intention to act, can be seen as a potential action. If God is an eternal being, he cannot even have the potential to act. Manorathanandin defines a cause as that in the absence of which the effect does not arise[2]; since an eternal being is never absent, it cannot be a cause. If a cause were defined as that in the presence of which an effect is present, then every eternal being, such as ether, would have to be regarded as the cause of everything,[3] in which case there would be no justification for singling out God as a creator. The following verse, however, offers a different aspect of what it means to be a cause.

26. yeṣu satsu bhavaty eva yat tebhyo ’nyasya kalpane
taddhetutvena sarvatra hetūnām anavasthitiḥ

gang dag yod na gang ’gyur nyid
de dag las gzhan de yi rgyu
rtog pa yin na thams cad la
rgyu rnams thug pa med par ’gyur

If one considers a thing’s cause to be something other than those things in whose presence it surely comes into being, there will be no end of causes anywhere.

According to Manorathanandin, the point of this verse is that if an adequate explanation of something such as a sprout can be given by appealing only to such observable causes as soil and seeds, then there is no need to make an appeal to putatively unobservable factors such a God. If one insists on taking such unobservable factors into

[2] yadabhāvāt kāryābhāvaḥ sa tatkāraṇam.
[3] anyathā ākāśādīnām api hetutvaprasaṅgaḥ.

consideration, there is no end to the number of causal factors that might be considered relevant.

27. svabhāvapariṇāmena hetur aṅkurajanmani
bhūmyādis tasya saṃskāre tadviśeṣasya darśanāt

myu gu skyed la sa la sogs
rang bzhin yongs su gyur nas ni
rgyu yin de legs byas pa na
de yi khyad par mthong phyir ro

Soil and so forth, owing to a transformation of nature, is a cause of a seedling's arising, since the its [*scil,* the seedling's] change is observed in the preparation of that [soil].

If one observes the growth of a plant from a seed, one can observe the role played by the soil and the seed and other factors that contribute to the growth of the plant. The plant grows as a result of the interaction of all these factors, and all these factors are changed in the process of contributing to the plant's growth. The plant acquires certain characteristics by taking them from the soil, which leaves the soil in an altered state. As the plant grows, all the factors from which it acquires its own characteristics lose something in the process. From such observations we can derive the conclusion that whatever participates as a causal factor in the birth or growth of something else undergoes observable changes in nature. There can be no role played by a factor that does not undergo such changes in nature. Therefore, no eternal being can participate in the changes that take place in the empirical world.

28. yathā viśeṣeṇa vinā viṣayendriyasaṃhatiḥ
buddher hetus tathedam cen na tatrāpi viśeṣataḥ

gal te ji ltar yul dbang po
tshogs pa khyad med blo rgyu yin
de ltar 'di yin zhe na min
de las khyad par yod phyir ro

But could this be similar to a sense-faculty's contacting a sensible object, which without change is a cause of awareness? No. For there is a change even in that case.

Dharmakīrti here anticipates an objection that might be raised by those who believe in divine participation. Suppose, they say, that this creation of the world by God were similar to a sense-faculty's contacting a sense-object. The sense-faculty undergoes no change while it serves as a cause of awareness, nor does the sensible object. So, for example, when the eyes are open in the presence of a visible colour, neither the eye nor the sensed colour undergoes change, and yet both serve as causes of vision. God could very well function in just the same way. This objection, answers Dharmakīrti, rests upon a false premiss.

29. pṛthakpṛthagaśaktānāṃ svabhāvātiśaye 'sati
saṃhatāv apy asāmarthyaṃ syāt siddho 'tiśayas tataḥ

so so so sor nus med rnams
rang bzhin khyad par med pas na
tshogs kyang nus pa med 'gyur bas
de phyir khyad par grub pa yin

Things that are separately incompetent would have no capacity to act even in contact if they had no excellence by nature. Therefore excellence is established.

Prajñākaragupta offers no comment whatsoever on this verse. Manorathanandin adds only a minimal explanation, saying "Otherwise, sensible objects and sense faculties that are separately incompetent would have no capacity to act even in contact if they had no excellence by nature, because of of a lack of a difference in nature with respect to acquiring cognition. Yet cognition arises. Therefore, because of the production of cognition, excellence is established."

In looking at this verse from a modern perspective, one might interpret it to be making an argument along these lines: A sense-faculty functions to cause awareness because it has a potential to do so. This potential is in the form of an amount of energy that is held in reserve. But once that energy is used to produce some effect, it ceases to exist and must be replaced by another quantity of energy. Any action involves a change from a potential state to an actual state, and any change from potentiality to actuality therefore involves some change in the levels of energy in whatever participants in the action. Therefore if God participates in the world in the same way that a sense-organ participates in awareness, he must undergo changes in energy levels, and if he undergoes such changes, he cannot be eternal.

30. tasmāt pṛthag aśakteṣu yeṣu sambhāvyate guṇaḥ
saṃhatau hetunā teṣāṃ neśvarāder abhedataḥ

de phyir so sor gang nus med
tshogs na yon tan srid 'gyur ba
de dag rgyu yin dbang phyug sogs
ma yin khyad par med phyir ro

Therefore those things that are separately incompetent in which efficacy is possible are a cause when in contact. But God and other such things are not causes, because they undergo no change.

A sense organ cannot bring about awareness unless it comes into contact with a stimulus. This stimulus prompts a change in the sense-organ, and a by-product of that change is awareness. But it should be obvious that a process such as this cannot have any parallels to the situation of an eternal being. First of all, God is supposed to be not only eternal but also omnipresent. Therefore, he is always in contact with everything. And therefore no change can be prompted in him on account of his coming into contact with something with which he was previously not in contact. Indeed, no change of any kind can ever occur in any eternal being. Therefore, it cannot be the case that any eternal being plays any role in the world of change. This conclusion applies to such supposedly eternal beings as God (īśvara), the self (ātman), and both the primordial matter (prakṛti) and the person (puruṣa) that are important components of the Sāṃkhyā system of philosophy.

Now it should be recalled that this entire argument against the existence of God is simply one tactic in Dharmakīrti's overall strategy of showing that there is no good reason to believe in the Vedas or any other body of revealed literature. In particular, there is no reason to believe that any body of literature is credible on account of having been revealed or inspired by a divine source. The main reason why some people have more confidence in a divine source than in a human source is that the divine source is considered to be infallible. This infallibility is supposed to derive from the fact that God is both omnipresent and eternal. Since he is always everywhere, there can be nothing that he does not know, and therefore nothing that he says in sincerity can be false. But the very supposition that God is eternal, says Dharmkīrti, rules out the possibility that God could ever act. Thus even if God does know everything, he still cannot take the action of communicating his knowledge to human beings.

Confidence in the reliability of supposedly divinely inspired scriptures, therefore, is an unjustified and unjustifiable confidence. There is, therefore, no reason to believe that acting on the basis of beliefs that one has acquired as a result of reading scriptures will lead to the results that one expects; in particular, there is no good reason to believe that if one follows one's duty (*dharma*) as it is specified in the Vedas, then one will enjoy the rewards in heaven promised by the Vedas.

Chapter 3

The Buddha's Authority and Compassion

3.1 The Buddha's Possession of Knowledge (vv. 31–35)

In the next verses, Dharmakīrti anticipates the problem that the Buddhist arguments against divine authority may also undermine the Buddhist's claims that the Buddha possessed knowledge of use to people seeking the goal of nirvana. The Mīmāṃsikas and the materialists both argued that the Buddha could not have the kind of authority that Buddhists claimed for him. The materialists took the view that the only source of knowledge is the sensation of sensible objects; anything that is presently beyond the range of the senses can never be know with certainty. Mīmāṃsikas, on the other hand, argued that no human being could ever have knowledge of things that were beyond the range of the normal human senses; but if the Buddha was merely a human being, then there is no reason to believe that his knowledge and understanding was appreciably less limited than than of anyone else.

31. prāmāṇyaṃ ca parokṣārthajñānaṃ tatsādhanasya ca
abhāvān nāsty anuṣṭhānām iti kecit pracakṣate

tshad ma lkog gyur don shes yin
de sgrub byed kyang med pa'i phyir
nan tan byed pa yod ma yin
zhes ni kha cig rab tu brjod

Some people assert that being a source of knowledge consists in knowing objects beyond the range of the senses, and there is no demonstration of that [kind of knowledge], therefore there is no undertaking.

Some people, identified by Manorathanandin as followers of the Jaimanīya (Mīmāṃsā) system, claimed that nothing can be called an authority unless it can provide knowledge about what lies beyond the range of the senses, but there is no way of being certain about what lies beyond the senses. Since what is beyond the range of the senses is forever unknowable, there is no method by which anyone can attain knowledge of the sort that would make him authoritative. And no one will undertake to follow the advice of one who lacks authority. This position is answered in the following verse.

32. jñānavān mṛgyate kaścit taduktapratipattaye
ajñopadeśakaraṇe vipralambhanaśaṅkibhiḥ

mi shes ston par byed pa la
'khrul par dogs ba can rnams kyis
des bshad nan tan bya ba'i phyir
shes ldan 'ga' zhig tshol bar byed

Those who fear disappointment in acting on the instruction of someone who does not know seek out some knowledgeable person in order to undertake what he says.

People who wish to attain heaven (*svarga*), final absolution (*apavarga*) and the principal goals of human life (*pradhānapuruṣārtha*), says Manorathanandin, seek out someone who has knowledge of such things in order that they may gain access to them. Prajñākaragupta, anticipating Dharmakīrti's next verse, adds that it is not necessary for a person to know everything in order to serve as an authority in the principal goals of human life; it is sufficient that he know just those principal things.

33. tasmād anuṣṭheyagataṃ jñānam asya vicāryatam
kīṭasaṃkhyāparijñānaṃ tasya naḥ kvopayujyate

de phyir de yi bsgrub bya ru
gyur pa'i ye shes rnam dpyad bya'i
'di yis srin bu'i grangs mkhyen pa
nged la 'gar yang nyer mkho med

Therefore, one should examine his [that is, the knowledgeable person's] opinions about what ought to be undertaken. Of what use to us is his thorough knowledge about the total number of insects?

It is understandable that people seek out one who has expertise in such important matters as how to become contented. There are those like the Mīmāṃsakas who make promises of contentment in an afterlife but who can provide no evidence that this happiness will actually come in the next life. And there are others who claim to follow the wisdom of an authority who knows absolutely everything, including how many insects there are in the world. But, says Dharmakīrti, why should one be impressed by such claims of omniscience; after all, what good can it do a human being to know the number of insects in the world?

In looking for advice on how to be contented in the world, one should seek a teacher who can speak in straightforward terms about what we ought to do and what we ought to avoid doing in order to be happy in this world before we die. And one should be wary of anyone who talks about matters that are irrelevant to the central issue, which is how one must act in order to rid oneself of discontent.

34. heyopadeyatattvasya sābhyupāyasya vedakaḥ
yaḥ pramāṇam asāv iṣṭo na tu sarvasya vedakaḥ

blang dang dor bya'i de nyid ni
thabs dang bcas pa rigs mdzad pa
gang de tshad ma nyid 'dod kyi
thams cad rigs mdzad ma yin no

He is regarded as source of knowledge who knows the truth about what ought to be avoided and what ought to be given up along with the method [of so doing], not he who knows everything.

The Buddha is called the omniscient one (*sarvajña*) not because his followers believe that he knew absolutely everything, but because he knew everything that matters to a human being, namely, the cause of discontent, the origin of discontent, and the method (upāya) that must be used to rid oneself of discontent by eliminating its causes. Manorathanandin suggests that discontent (*duḥkha*) is what ought to be avoided; the causes of discontent (*samudāya*) are what are to be given up; the method (*abhyupāya*) of achieving the cessation (*nirodha*) of discontent is the Noble Path (*mārga*). In other words, the kind of person one turns to as an authority is one who knows the Four Noble Truths.

35. dūraṃ paśyatu vā mā vā tattvam iṣṭaṃ tu paśyatu
pramāṇaṃ dūradarśī ced eta gṛdhrān upāsmahe

ring po mthong ba'am min yang rung
'dod pa'i de nyid mthong ba yin
gal te ring mthong tshad yin na
tshur shog bya rgod bsten par gyis

Whether or not one can see far away, one must be able to see the truth that is desired. If one who is far-sighted is a source of knowledge, then come here, let's attend to the vultures!

This, says Manorathanandin, is Dharmakīrti's satirical commentary on those who seek out teachers who claim to have telepathic gifts but who cannot tell people what they really long to hear, which is advice on what course of action they must follow in order to be content. The Vedic seers and other prophets are compared to vultures, who also have the gift of seeing and hearing what ordinary people cannot. The vulture in Indian literary convention is an image of unrestrained greed; the vulture is therefore a favourite Buddhist metaphor for those who claim to bring revelations to humanity, for the assumption is that such people are motivated only by the ordinary worldy desires for fame and profit and influence over others.

3.2 The Buddha's compassion

3.2.1 Dismissal of materialist view of mind (vv. 36–44)

36. sādhanaṃ karuṇābhyāsāt sā buddher dehasaṃśrayāt
asiddo 'bhyāsa iti cen nāśrayapratiṣedhataḥ

sgrub byed thugs rje[1] *goms las de*
blo ni lus la brten pa'i phyir
goms pas grub pa med ce na
ma yin rten ni bkag phyir ro

What demonstrates [the Buddha's authority] is [his] compassion. It comes from habitual practice. One might think that there is no establishing habitual practice, since the mind resides in the body. But that is not so, because there is a denial of [such] support.

The view that Dharmakīrti will attempt to develop in this text is that the Buddha's word can be trusted, because it can be established that he had no ulterior motive in offering his teaching to people. Since he stood to gain nothing personally from teaching the four noble truths, his only motivation was compassion, defined by Manorathanandin as "the desire to rescue others from discontent and from the cause of discontent."

But the compassion of the Buddha was extraordinary and so could have been cultivated only by an extraordinary amount of practice carried on for a very long time.

[1] Tibetan text reads *thugs rjes*, which seems unlikely.

At this point Dharmakīrti anticipates an objection from the materialists, according to whom it is impossible for anyone to have the kind of compassion ascribed to the Buddha. Buddhists believe that the Buddha's compassion was cultivated over the course of many lifetimes. But this is impossible, say the materialists, because compassion is a quality of consciousness, and consciousness cannot survive without the body, because the physical body is the cause of consciousness. Therefore, when the body dies, so does consciousness, and when consciousness dies, so do all the mental qualities, both good and bad, that have been cultivated during the person's life.

Dharmakīrti rejects the materialists' argument on the grounds that it rests upon a false assumption. The assumption of the materialist is that consciousness is nothing but a by-product of physical processes. Therefore, if this assumption is to be shown to be false, the task of the Buddhist is to prove somehow that consciousness is not dependent upon physical causes.

37–38a[1] prāṇāpānendriyadhiyāṃ dehād eva na kevalāt
sajātinirapekṣāṇāṃ janma janmaparigrahe
atiprasaṅgāt

skye ba yongs su len pa na
'byung rngub dbang po blo dag ni
rang gi rigs la ltos med can
lus nyid 'ba' zhig las skye min ha cad thal phyir

It is not the case that inhalation, exhalation, the sense faculties and thought, being independent of [antecedent causal conditions of] the same class, arise from the physical body alone. Because, when there is an assumption of [such] arising, there is a farfetched conclusion.

Manorathanandin and Prajñākaragupta both explain that it is incorrect to say that the act of breathing, the five sense faculties and thought arise independently of previously existing acts of breathing, sense faculties and thought. The commentators' assertion follows principles set out in the Buddhist abhidharma tradition, according to which nothing has a single cause. Rather, everything that comes into being is the product of a complex of causal factors. One kind of causal factor that is always present is an antecedent condition that belongs to the same class of thing as the product itself. A mental event, for example, is caused by many factors, one of which is a previous mental event. Therefore, such things as the life principle, consciousness and other such faculties always depend upon a combination of non-material conditions and material conditions. If one were to assume, says Manorathanandin, that features of life such as breathing arise out of the material elements alone (*mahābhūtebhya eva kevalebhyaḥ*), then one would have to conclude that the entire material world is alive; but this conclusion is farfetched, for we can observe that in fact much of the physical world is lifeless. If life arises only out of the material elements, then how can we account for the fact that some parts of the world are alive, while the rest is lifeless?

38a[2]d yad dṛṣṭaṃ pratisandhānaśaktimat
kim āsīt tasya yan nāsti paścād yena na sandhimat

mtshams sbyor par
nus ldan mthong ba gang de la
ci zhig yod 'gyur gang med pa
gang gis phyi nas mtshams sbyor med

What observable thing possessing the capacity for rebirth linking did it have that it does not have later, because of which it does not have [the capacity for] rebirth linking?[2]

The materialist argues against the possibility of a succession of connected lives, since there is nothing material to carry the mind from one material body to another. And yet he argues that observable matter itself has the potential to generate consciousness. If it is granted, however, that the observable material body had the capacity to generate one's consciousness at the beginning of the present life, one may ask what feature of the material body is lost at death that results in the loss of the capacity to create consciousness. The body, after all, continues to be observable. Dharmakīrti's aim is asking this rhetorical question is that since itself matter continues to have the same nature after one dies as it had during life, the materialist is hard pressed to explain why consciousness does not continue to be generated by a material body even after it has died.

39. na sa kaścit pṛthivyāder aṃśo yatra na jantavaḥ
saṃsvedajādyā jāyante sarvaṃ bījātmakaṃ tataḥ

gang du drod gsher la sogs pa
skye bo skye bar mi 'gyur ba'i
sa sogs cha de 'ga' yang med
de phyir thams cad sa bon bdag

There is no part of [the four elements, namely,] earth and so on in which creatures such as those [insects] which are born of sweat etc. are not born. Therefore everything must have the nature of a seed.

Manorathanandin explains that a materialist might argue that the sense faculties and mental activities might very well arise only from the material body, and this argument need not result in the far-fetched conclusion mentioned by Dharmakīrti in verse 37–38a[1]. It could be, argues the materialist, that only some material bodies, which have

[2]The terms *pratisaṃdhāna* and *saṃdhi* (*mtshams sbyor*) both literally mean linking; they are technical terms for the first moment of consciousness in a new life, which is supposedly causually linked with the antecedent intentions of a previous lives. For convenience, one may refer to this process as rebirth linking.

developed in a particular way, provide the conditions necessary for consciousness and sensation to arise, while other kinds of matter that have not developed in particualr ways fail to support sentient life. There are plenty of examples of such specializations of matter in the natural world. Gold,for example, can be refined from gold ore, but not from other kinds of rock. So why could it not be the case that sensation arises only in some kinds of matter that is configured in a particular way?

In replying to the materialist argument, Dharmakīrti asserts that there is no part of the material world in which one does not find some kind of sentient creatures living. This would suggest that every kind of matter has the potential to produce life, and therefore there is no evidence to support the materialist's claim that matter must be specially configured to support sentience. So, suggest Manorathanandin, the fact that some matter is evidently sentient while some matter is not cannot be accounted for by facts within the material world alone; there must be some non-material factors involved in the production of sensation and mental events.

40. tat sajātyanapekṣāṇām akṣādīnāṃ samudbhave
pariṇāmo yathāikasya syāt sarvasyāviśeṣataḥ

de phyir dbang sogs rang rigs la ltos pa med par 'byung yin na
ji ltar gcig ni yongs 'gyur bzhin
kun 'gyur khyad par med phyir ro

Therefore, if the sense faculties arise independent of [causes of] the same class, then the transformation of everything would be like that of any one thing, for there would be no distinctions [in cause].

If there were no non-material factors to account for the special qualities of sentience, says Manorathanandin, there would be no distinction between a sentient being and a lump of earth, for both would be derived from exactly the same causes and conditions.

41. pratyekam upaghāte 'pi nendriyāṇāṃ manomateḥ
upaghāto 'sti bhaṅge 'syās teṣāṃ bhaṅgaś ca dṛśyate

dbang rnams re re la gnod na
yid blo la gnod yod ma yin
'di bgyur na ni de dag kyang
'gyur ba dag tu mthong ba yin

Even if there is destruction of the sense faculties one at a time, there is no destruction of awareness in the mind. And it is observed that when there is a disturbance of that [awareness in the mind], there is a disturbance in the sense faculties.

The purpose of this verse, says Manorathanandin, is to show that the physical body with its sense faculties is not the seat of awareness. The claim is made in this verse that the mind does not stop working, even if every one of the physical senses stops working. Even if a person had no sight, no hearing, and no sense of smell, taste and touch, the mind would continue to produce thoughts. This shows that awareness is not dependent on the physical senses. On the other hand, a slight modification in mood can have a profound effect on the way the senses operate. The senses of a person who is very excited or afflicted by pain, for example, function differently from a person who is calm. Following the principle that a thing that undergoes change when a second thing undergoes change is dependent upon that second thing, Manorathanandin argues that this shows that the physical senses are dependent on consciousness, not the other way around. Therefore, one must reject the materialist's claim that consciousness is purely a by-product of physical processes.

42. tasmāt sthityāśrayo buddher buddhim eva samāśritaḥ
kaścin nimittam akṣāṇāṃ tasmād akṣāṇi buddhitaḥ

de phyir blo gnas pa yi rten
blo nyid la ni brten pa 'ga'
dbang po rnams kyi rgyu yin pas
de phyir blo las dbang po yin

Therefore, something that is the support of the mind's continuity, which support is dependent on the mind itself, is the cause of the sense faculties. Therefore, the sense faculties derive from the mind.

According to Prajñākaragupta, the causal occasion (*nimitta*) of the sense organs is karma, and karma itself is defined in abhidharma treatises as intention and that action which results from intending (*cetanā karma cetayitvā vā*). Since intention is a mental event that shapes the physical body, including the sense faculties, it is more accurate to say that the physical body is the product of mental events than to say that mental events are the product of the physical body.

43. yādṛśyākṣepikā sāsīt paścād apy astu tādṛśī
tajjñānair upakāryatvād uktaṃ kāyāśritaṃ manaḥ

de 'dra'i 'phen byed yod gyur na
phyis kyang de 'drar 'gyur ba yin
de yi shes pas phan 'dogs phyir
yid ni lus la brten par bshad

> **That [mind] which arises later is like the propellent [mind] that existed [earlier]. Consciousness is said to be dependent on the body because it is capable of being assisted by cognitions about it.**

According to the Buddhists, the notion of a causal continuum is that of an uninterrupted series of causes and their effects in which the effects have the same qualities as their causes. In particular, vicious mental actions are the causes of displeasure arising in the future, and virtuous mental actions are the causes of pleasure arising in the future. A vicious or a virtuous mental action is said to propel its ripening into the future; if the consequence is not experienced within one life, it will be experienced in some future life. Therefore, there is a similarity between the consciousness that propels and the later consciousness that experiences the ripenings of the earlier karma. It is this similarity of cause and effect, karma and karmic ripening, that stands behind the sense of there being a continuity of consciousness from one moment to the next and from one life to the next.

It is true that the Buddha stated quite explicitly that consciousness is dependent on the physical body with its physical senses. He also said, as is quoted by Manorathanandin, that the body and mind are dependent upon one another (*anyonyānuvidhāyitvaṃ kāyamanasoḥ*). Therefore it might appear as if Dharmakīrti has refuted the materialists at the price of contradicting the Buddha himself. This is not a problem, explains Manorathanandin, because what the Buddha meant when he said that was simply that awareness of visible things arises from the eye, awareness of sounds arises from the ear and so forth. In other words, the type of awareness one has is determined by the sense organ that is functioning. But this does not mean that the very fact of having awareness at all is a consequence of having a physical body with functioning sense organs.

44. yady apy akṣair vinā buddhir na tāny api tayā vinā
tathāpi anyonyahetutvaṃ tato 'py anyonyahetuke

gal te dbang po med par blo
ma yin de yang de med par
de lta'ang phan tshun rgyu nyid pas
de phyir phan tshun rgyu can yin

> **Although there is no awareness without the sense faculties, they also [do] not [arise] without it. There is, nevertheless, a relation of reciprocal causality. From it [arise] the two reciprocally caused things.**

Manorathanandin and Prajñākaragupta both suggest that the verse is an answer to an anticipated objection. Someone holding a materialistic view might argue that since awareness does not arise without the sense faculties, it is correct to say that the sense faculties are the support (*āśraya*) of consciousness. In reply to that, Dharmakīrti

observes that although it is true that there is no awareness without the sense faculties, it is also true that the sense faculties do not arise without awareness. This condition is still known as reciprocal causality (*anyonyahetukatva*). From this, says Manorathanandin arise the body and mind, which are mutually caused, having interacted in this flow of causal reciprocity without any beginning in time. This beginningless flow of reciprocally caused mental and physical events, says Manorathanandin, establishes that there is life after death. Prajñākaragupta does not draw quite the same rather puzzling conclusion that Manorathanandin draws; Prajñākaragupta is content to say that the body and mind both arise from a whole (*sāmagrī*) made up of physical and mental components. From that whole (*tato'pi sāmagrītaḥ*) arise both former and later reciprocally caused body and mind.

The final position of Dharmakīrti on this question, then,is that one cannot determine that the physical body is prior to awareness, nor can one say that awareness is prior to the physical body. The two have always been interdependent in this world that has no beginning. The purpose of these arguments, therefore, has not been to support the claim that the physical world arose out of mind. Rather, the purpose has been to show that mental events cannot be reduced to material causes alone, and that there is a continuity of consciousness after the death of the physical body.

3.2.2 Establishing the nature of awareness (vv. 45–81)

45. nākramāt kramiṇo bhāvo nāpy apekṣyāviśeṣiṇaḥ
kramād bhavantī dhīḥ kāyāt kramaṃ tasyāpi śaṃsati

rim can min las rim can min
khyad par can min ltos pa'ang med
lus las rim gyis blo 'gyur na
de'i yang rim pa gsal bar byed

A sequential [effect] does not come into being from a non-sequential cause, nor does that which has a uniform [stable] nature [come into being] depending [on external causes]. Thought that comes into being sequentially from the body also indicates the sequence of the body.

As we saw above in verse 44, Dharmakīrti's conclusion is that the consciousness and the physical body are interdependent, and therefore it cannot be said one is temporally prior to the other—that is, there has never been a time when consciousness existed as pure spirit without the support of a physical body, nor has there ever been a time when living bodies existed without consciousness. Similarly, it cannot be said that either the body or consciousness is logically prior to the other—that is, it cannot be shown that consciousness is merely an accidental by-product of matter that has been organized in a particular way, nor can it be shown that the physical body is in any way derivative from consciousness. In a relation of interdependence, neither relatum is more important than the other. In establishing that the body and mind are interdependent, Dharmakīrti must argue against two philosophical opponents. On the one hand, he must argue against

those who give priority to consciousness, and on the other he must argue against those who give a priority to the material body.

In verse 45 Dharmakīrti lays down the basic principle that anything that has a cause comes into being at some point in time; that is, there is a time when the thing in question does not exist, and then there is a subsequent time at which the thing in question does exist. What accounts for the fact that a being arises at a given moment as opposed to some earlier time? According to Dharmakīrti, the answer is that an effect comes into being only when the totality of its causes have arisen together in the same place at the same time. And this can happen only through changes in the causes themselves. In other words, the causes must be as temporal as the effect. This rules out the possibility that the temporal material body could arise from an atemporal spiritual cause. It also rules out the possibility that the mind, which is observed to be constantly changing, could be free of causes.

46. pratikṣaṇam apūrvasya pūrvaḥ pūrvaḥ kṣaṇo bhavet
tasya hetu ato hetur dṛṣṭa evāstu sarvadā

skad cig snga ma snga ma ni
skad cig re re sngon med de'i
rgyu yin de yi phyir na rgyu
thams cad tshe na mthong ba nyid

At every moment every prior moment of a new thing would be its cause, and therefore the cause would be observed at all times.

Prajñākaragupta explains that the view under consideration here is that the body, which is dependent on antecedent mental states, generates thoughts successively. That being the case, the body is not uniform in nature but has internal differentiation. Therefore, the antecedent bodily states are the cause of subsequent bodily states. If that is the case, says Dharmakīrti, then the previously observed body that supported awareness in the past will continue to do so forever. Manorathanandin's commentary offers essentially the same interpretation for this verse. If an antecedent whole comprising mental and corporeal components acts as the cause of a subsequent whole comprising mental and corporeal events, he says, then the process that is observed to be occurring would be observed at all times, that is, at the time of birth in the present life and at the time of birth in a future form. In other words, the materialist's reduction of all mental states to physical events still does not eliminate the possibility of rebirth, for the process could still continue as a series of purely corporeal events. This materialist's hypothesis, then, would turn out to have the same implications as the Buddhist hypothesis of a series of interacting mental and corporeal events: under either hypothesis, there is rebirth.

47. cittāntarasya sandhāne ko virodho 'ntyacetasaḥ
tadvad apy arhataś cittam asandhānaṃ kuto matam

tha ma'i sems ni sems gzhan dang
mtshams sbyor ba la 'gal ci yod
dgra bcom sems gang yin de yang
gang las mtshams sbyor med par 'dod

Concerning another thought's rebirth linking, what obstructs the final thought? That being the case, why is it supposed that the [last] thought of an arhant has no rebirth linking?

The Buddhist argument designed to establish a continuation of life after the death of the present body is based on the general observation that a causal momentum continues until something impedes it. That is, each cause gives rise to a similar effect, which in turn becomes the cause for further effects. Unless something is done to interrupt this series, it will continue indefinitely. The basic cause of rebirth, according to Buddhist tradition, is simply the desire to continue existing. If a person at the moment of death regrets dying or wishes to continue existing, that will to survive acts as a sufficient cause for the continuation of the continuum of consciousness. This will to survive is called the rebirth-linking consciousness (*pratisandhāna-vijñāna*). When it arises in the mind of a person who is dying, there is nothing that can stop the continuity of consciousness.

In this verse, Dharmakīrti anticipates a question that a materialist can be expected to raise. On the topic of a subsequent thought arising as a rebirth link, what obstructs the final thought of one life from producing it successor in a subsequent life? Prajñākaragupta and Manorathanandin both explain that this is a rhetorical question that invites the answer 'There is nothing at all obstructing it.' Now, the materialist might go on to say, if one accepts the argument that the will to live is carried from one life to another unless it is obstructed, what grounds is there for believing that arhants are not also reborn? It cannot be established by observation, and so it must be an object of inference. But this matter is also impossible to infer, say the materialists, because all inference is grounded ultimately in some observation of the subject about which the inference is being made. But since no one can ever have observed what happens to an arhant after death, it is impossible to draw any inferences concerning whether or not they are reborn. Therefore, the Buddhist is asserting something without adequate justification.

48. asiddhārthaḥ pramāṇena kiṃ siddhānto 'nugamyate
hetor vaikalyatas tac cet kiṃ tad evātra noditaṃ

tshad mas ma grub don can gyi
grub mtha'i rjes su 'brang ngam ci
gal te de rgyu bral phyir na
de nyid 'dir ni cis ma brjod

> **Can one by a source of knowledge reach a conclusion whose subject matter has not been established? If that [lack of rebirth linking] is accepted on the basis of a deficiency in the cause, why is that [deficiency] not stated here as well?**

Manorathanandin's commentary says that the issue here is the Buddhist view that the absence of rebirth linking comes about only as a result of a mind's becoming free of afflictions (*kleśa*), and that this condition of becoming freed takes place only in the minds of arhants, not in the minds of ordinary people (*pṛthagjāna*). According to this Buddhist view, it is isolation from afflictions (*kleśavisaṃyoga*), not death itself, that prevents rebirth linking. The materialist, says Manorathanandin, might point out that Buddhists here merely arguing from the doctrines that they accept as true. It is Buddhist doctrine that arhants are uniquely capable of achieving an end to rebirth and that all other sentient beings are reborn; but the question is: 'Can the Buddhist arrive by an independent source of knowledge at a conclusion whose subject matter has not already been accepted by non-Buddhists?' If not, then this doctrine of rebirth and arhanthood is simply an article of faith. The materialist goes on to ask why one should believe that what prevents an arhant from being reborn, namely, a lack of the conditions necessary to continue life in another body, does not also prevent any ordinary being from being reborn. In other words,if Buddhists are willing to accept that an effect does not arise when the causes for its arising are not present, why can they not also accept the materialist's argument that there is no rebirth for anyone, because the causes for rebirth do not exist?

In answering this challenge, Dharmakīrti must address himself to the principal tenet of the materialists, which is that life is derived from matter. The materialist's conclusion is that matter in general is both logically and temporally prior to sentient matter in particular, and there is no need to find any causes in addition to material causes to account for consciousness.

49. taddhīvad grahaṇaprāpter manojñānaṃ na sendriyāt
jñānotpādanasāmarthyabhedān na sakalād api

de blo bzhin du 'dzin 'gyur phyir
dbang po bcas las yid shes min
shes skyed nus pa tha dad phyir
kun las kyang ni ma yin no

> **It is not the case that mental awareness is caused by a body with sense-faculties, because one receives apprehension as consciousness of that [sense faculty]. And since there is a difference in the capacities to produce cognition, awareness does not arise from the sense-faculties collectively.**

50. acetanatvān nānyasmād hetvabhedāt sahasthitiḥ
akṣavad rūparasavad arthadvāreṇa vikriyā

sems med nyid phyir gzhan las min
rgyu gcig phyir na lhan cig gnas
dbang bzhin gzugs dang ro bzhin no
don gyi sgo nas 'gyur ba yin

[Mental awareness does] not [arise] from something else, because it is insentient. The coincidence [of the body and mental awareness] is due to their having the same cause, like the sense facultiess and like colour and flavour. Change [in awareness] occurs on account of the subject matter of awareness.

Mental awareness (*mano-vijñāna*) may be seen as a kind of apperception, that is, an internal awareness of some kind of external object of which one becomes aware through vision, hearing or one of the other kinds of sensory awareness. As Manorathanandin and Prajñākaragupta both explain, if the body is believed to be the cause of mental awareness, then one can ask whether one is speaking of a body endowed with the faculties of sense or of a body not endowed with sense faculties. And if one is speaking of a body endowed with sense faculties, then one can ask whether mental awareness arises from the sense faculties individually or collectively. Dharmakīrti says in 49ab: "It is not the case that mental awareness is caused by a body with sense-faculties, because one receives apprehension as consciousness of that [sense faculty]." That is to say, when mental awareness follows vision (*caksur-vijñāna*), it takes a visible datum of colour as its subject matter, but when mental awareness follows hearing, it has a sound as its subject matter. If there were one sense faculty, such as the faculty of vision, from which every mental awareness arose, then the mental awareness of sound would arise from the faculty of vision. This is clearly not the case, so one cannot say that every mental awareness arises from the faculty of vision, or from any one of the other sense faculties. The fact that no mental awareness is a product of a single sense faculty might incline one to say that mental awareness arises from all the five external sense faculties collectively (*sakalād*) at the same time. This hypothesis, however, turns out to be unacceptable, since it does not provide an explanation for why mental awareness has different subject matters, sometimes being an apperception of a colour and at other times of a sound. Differences in effect are normally produced by differences in the cause or the set of causes. Since the collection of sense faculties taken as a whole is constant, its effect should also be constant. If mental awareness is not the product of the sense faculties individually or collectively, then it might be the product of some other part of the body. This possibility, however, is also untenable, says Dharmakīrti in verse 50a, since the parts of the body other than the sense faculties are lacking sentience. Awareness arising out of that which lacks awareness would violate the principle that effects can arise only out of causes that are similar to them in having certain key characteristics.

In verse 49–50a, Dharmakīrti argues that consciousness comes from neither the physical body with sense-faculties nor from the physical body devoid of sense-faculties. This amounts, of course, to saying that the body is not the sole cause of

consciousness. If the body is not the cause of consciousness, then it is reasonable to ask why consciousness always appears in association with (*sahasthiti*) a physical body. Dharmakīrti answers this by pointing out that when two things are always found together, it may be that the two things have a common cause—one need not, in other words, conclude that one thing is the cause of the other. A common example of two things that always occur together are the colour and taste of a piece of fruit. In this case, one does not conclude that the fruit's colour causes its flavour, nor does one conclude that its flavour causes its colour. Rather, one concludes that both the flavour and the colour have the same set of causes: a seed, soil, water, light and so on. According to Manorathanandin, the common cause that accounts for both the presence of the body and the presence of consciousness is karma.

51. sattopakāriṇī yasya nityaṃ tadanubandhataḥ
sa hetuḥ saptamī tasmād utpādād iti cocyate

rtag tu de yi rjes 'jug phyir
gang zhig yod pas phan 'dogs byed
de rgyu de phyir bdun pa dang
skyes phyir zhes ni bshad pa yin

The cause is anything whose presence assists [the production of an effect] owing to its invariably following it. Therefore, either the seventh case is used or [the expression] "after its birth".

In the preceding verses, Dharmakīrti's purpose was to show that the physical body is not the cause of consciousness. But this conclusion seems to be in conflict with the earlier statements that the body and consciousness are interdependent, which would seem to imply that the body is both a cause and an effect of consciousness. The body is a cause of consciousness in the broadest sense of the word "cause", which is specified here as that whose presence plays some role in the production of an effect owing to always being connected to that effect. This causal relation is known to occur whenever one observes that the effect arises when the cause is present and fails to arise when the cause is absent. That is why the most general form of the doctrine of dependent origination (*pratītya-samutpāda*) is stated in Sanskrit by the expression "asmin sati idam bhavati" (when this [first thing] is present, this [second thing] arises). In this formula the first phrase, "asmin sati" is in the seventh case, which is usually called the locative case in English descriptions of the Sanskrit language. Alternatively, one may express the causal relation in Sanskrit by using the fifth case, often called the ablative in English descriptions; the form of expression using the fifth case is "asya utpādāt idam bhavati" (this [second thing] arises after the birth of this [first thing]). Normally the seventh-case construction is used when the cause is simultaneous with the effect, as when atoms are the material cause of a complex material object. The fifth case is

used when one wishes to emphasize sequence, as when death inevitably follows birth and thus has birth as its cause.

52. astūpakārako vâpi kadācic cittasantateḥ
vahnyādivad ghaṭâdīnāṃ vinivṛttir na tāvatā

'ga' zhig tshe na sems rgyun la
phan 'dogs byed pa'ang yin sla ste
bum sogs la ni me sogs bzhin
de tsam gyis ni ldog pa min

Alternatively, it might be that [the body] sometimes assists the continuum of consciousness, as fire [sometimes assists in the process of making] of pots. There is no cessation [of the thing assisted] on account of just [the cessation of the assistance].

53. avinivṛttiprasaṅgaś ca dehe tiṣṭhati cetasaḥ
tadbhāvabhāvād vaśyatvāt prâṇāpānau tato na tat

lus ni gnas pa nyid na sems
ldog pa med par thal bar 'gyur
de yod yod dang dbang gyur phyir
de las 'byung rngub de ma yin

The unwelcome consequence still remains that there is no cessation of consciousness in the body. Breathing in and out occurs when consciousness is present; therefore breathing arises from the powers of the mind rather than vice versa.

Manorathanandin explains the intention of this argument as follows. The position of the materialist is that the body is a sufficient condition for consciousness; there is, in other words, no other causal factor that one must appeal to in order to account for the presence of awareness. But if this were so, says Dharmakīrti, then a person would never die. It is common observation that all the elements of the physical body continue to be present when a person dies. If these elements were sufficient to support life, then life would never end, because the physical elements are always present.

The materialist's reply to the above argument is that life is not caused by the mere presence of the elements of the physical body. The elements must be arranged in a particular way so that they can work together to draw air into the body. It is the function of breathing that accounts for life, and it is the presence of life that accounts

for consciousness. If it is admitted that life depends on breathing, replies Dharmakīrti, then it can be shown that breathing is caused by consciousness, not vice versa.

First of all, breathing and consciousness are coincident—one is never found without the other. Therefore, it is just as likely that consciousness causes breathing as that breathing causes consciousness. But in fact, says Dharmakīrti in the next two verse, it is much more likely that consciousness is the cause of breathing than that breathing is the cause of consciousness.

54. preraṇâkarṣaṇe vāyoḥ prayatnena vinā kutaḥ
nirhrāsātiśayāpattir nirhrāsâtiśayāt tayoḥ

rlung 'byin pa dang 'dren pa ni
'bad rtsol med par gang las yin
de dag yul byung 'grib pa las
phul byung 'grib pa thob par 'gyur

There is no exhalation or inhalation of air without conscious effort. One would get a decrease or increase of consciousness as a result of a decrease or increase of breathing.

55. tulyaḥ prasaṅgôpi tayoḥ na tulyaṃ cittakāraṇe
sthityāvedhakam anyac ca yataḥ kāraṇam iṣyate

de dag la yang thal ba mtshungs
sems rgyu yin na mtshungs ma yin
gnas pa'i 'phen byed gzhan dag kyang
gang phyir rgyu ni yin par 'dod

And there would be the same unwelcome consequence [as before]. But the same [unwelcome consequence does] not [arise] if life is caused by consciousness.

56. na doṣair viguṇo deho hetur vartyâdivad yadi
mṛte śamīkṛte doṣe punarujjīvanam bhavet

gal te sdong bu la sogs bzhin
nyes pas mi mthun lus rgyu min
shi bas nyes pa nyams gyur tshe
slar yang 'tsho ba dag tu 'gyur

If a body that is corrupted by diseases is not a cause [of life] as a [defective] wick [is not a cause of flame], [then] there would be a revival [of the vital breath] when [the body is] dead and its corruption is neutralized.

The materialists argue that much more than the mere presence of the physical elements is necessary to support life. The humours must also be in balance. When the humours are out of balance, the result is disease. A diseased body ceases to be a cause of life. This being so, says Dharmakīrti, we should expect that once a person dies, the diseases will also disappear. And since the diseases were the only things obstructing life, once they are gone, the body should return back to life.

57. nivṛtte 'py anale kāṣṭhavikārâvinivṛttivat
tasyânivṛttir iti cen na cikitsāprayogataḥ

gal te me ni ldog na yang
shing gi 'gyur ba mi ldog bzhin
de ni ldog pa med ce na
ma yin gso sbyor yod phyir ro

One might argue that that [disease] does not stop [after the body dies], just as firewood does not lose the changes it has undergone even when the flames have died down. But that is not the case, because medicine is applied.

The materialist replies to Dharmakīrti's argument by suggesting that the kind of changes that the body undergoes at death are irreversible, and therefore it is silly to suggest that when the body dies of a disease, then the disease that caused death disappears, and so the body returns to life.

Dharmakīrti rejoins that the materialists have not provided a good analogy. Not all changes are irreversible like the changes that occur in wood as a result of being exposed to fire. Diseases cause changes in the body, such as fevers, but these changes can be reversed by applying medications. Therefore, it is not so silly to argue that death, which is one of the changes caused by disease, may disappear when its cause disappears.

58. apunarbhāvataḥ kiñcid vikārajananaṃ kvacit
kiñcid viparyayād agnir yathā kāṣṭhasuvarṇayoḥ

slar mi ’byung bar ’ga’ zhig ni
la lar ’gyur ba skyed par byed
’ga’ zhig ldog pa yin phyir dper
shing dang gser la me bzhin no

In some circumstances, something produces a change because it does not return; for example, fire [produces a change] in firewood [by not returning]. In some circumstances, something produces a change because it does return; for example, fire [produces a change] in gold [by being repeatedly applied].

59. ādyasyâlpo ’py asaṃhāryaḥ pratyāneyas ti yatkṛtaḥ
vikāraḥ syāt punarbhāvaḥ tasya hemni kharatvavat

dang po chung yang ldog pa min
slar ldog rung bar ’gyur byas gang
de ni slar yang ’byung ’gyur te
gser gyi sra ba nyid bzhin no

[The transformation] of the former [example] is minor but irreversible. But there may be a return of a reversible transformation, such as the hardness of gold.

When a piece of wood comes into contact with a flame, it may be discoloured. This discolouration may be minor, but the wood can never be restored to the state it was in before it was burned. Gold, on the other hand, can be transformed dramatically by the repeated application of fire—it can be changed from a solid into a liquid. But this transformation, though dramatic, is reversible.